

Beyond 'content' and 'pedagogy': in search of a way to talk about history education

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One of the least examined forms of school/university collaboration is that which brings together scholars in a given discipline and teachers in the corresponding school subject. The paper investigates four summer institute sites of the California History-Social Science Project, focusing on the language used by historians and teachers to describe their own and each others' roles and contributions.

The study reveals two sets of discourses. The first involves the notions of 'content' and 'pedagogy'. Although these terms seem to level the playing field of professional authority between discipline-based professors (as 'content experts') and teachers (as 'pedagogy experts'), they provide a problematic, fundamentally technical model of history teaching and learning. The second, revolving around 'doing the discipline', provides a far more satisfactory account of, and trajectory for, collaborative professional work aimed at teaching and learning for understanding.

In a presentation to the 1984 California conference, 'History in the schools: what shall we teach?', Hazel Hertzberg (1988) asked provocatively, 'Are method and content enemies?'. Of course, she said, most classroom teachers know that they are not. But she went on to offer an explanation of how 'content' and 'method' have come to be seen as separate and competing. In her interpretation, the schism resulted from the dynamics among classroom teachers, school administrators, and college and university historians over the course of the twentieth century. Professionalization and specialization exacerbated the split, resulting, after World War Two, in the 'disintegration' of 'the old union of method and content' (Hertzberg 1988: 35). By this time, she claimed, 'historians were cast in the role of content experts' (1998: 36). The separation of 'content' and 'method' and the distance between historians and teachers were thus closely connected problems.

In contrast to Hertzberg's historical explanation for this dualism, John Dewey (1916: 164-165) offered a philosophical interpretation of the same problem:

The idea that mind and the world of things and persons are two separate and independent realms . . . carries with it the conclusion that method and subject matter of instruction are separate affairs. Subject matter then becomes a

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ready-made systematized classification of the facts and principles of the world of nature and man. Method then has for its province a consideration of the ways in which this antecedent subject matter may be best presented to and impressed upon the mind.

The subject matter, or content, thus becomes inert knowledge, while pedagogy becomes a matter of its 'delivery'.

In his seminal paper Lee Shulman (1986: 6) returned to the same problem: 'Why this sharp distinction between content and pedagogical process?' Concerned above all with educational research and policy questions, Shulman noted the extent to which 'content' had been dropped from the agenda. In order to work back towards a balanced and whole conception of teachers' knowledge, however, he employed the terms 'content' and 'pedagogy' liberally, offering rich and nuanced definitions of each, and launching what subsequently became a major research field at their intersection, *pedagogical content knowledge* (Shulman 1987, Wineburg and Wilson 1991, Grossman and Yerian 1992, Gardner and Boix-Mansilla 1994, cf. McEwen and Bull 1991). Carefully and consciously employed, as Shulman and others have demonstrated, the terms 'content' and 'pedagogy' themselves may be helpful in healing the split that they define.

Hertzberg, Dewey, and Shulman remind us that content separated from pedagogy is an incomplete metaphor for knowledge. Yet the dichotomous formulation has tremendous staying power. This paper examines a setting where such a dichotomy can be particularly problematic: a setting where historians and teachers come together for professional development. In this encounter, the issues of teachers' and historians' respective knowledge are never far from the surface. They engage in a critical but often uneasy negotiation, where epistemological questions (whose knowledge counts for what?) intersect with concerns about status and recognition. In this setting, the discourse of content and pedagogy constructs a certain set of relations between historians and teachers, with historians as content specialists and teachers as specialists in pedagogy (Luke 1995).

Thankfully, encounters between historians and teachers are much more frequent today than when Hertzberg took aim at historians' isolation from the schools in the 1980s.¹ These activities have taken place, moreover, in the context of a more general interest in collaboration between schools and universities, and in reforming the understanding of teaching as an intellectual (rather than a technical) endeavour (Holmes Group 1986, Sirotnik and Goodlad 1988, Wilbur, Lambert and Young 1988, Cuban 1992, Lieberman 1992, American Association for Higher Education 1995, Nelson and Hammerman 1996).

The encounter between historians and teachers can potentially provide the stimulus to fundamentally rethink what constitutes history education. It can provide an opportunity to think deeply about the nature of historical understanding, that of historians, of teachers, and of students. But it is only *potentially* so. The encounter can also act to reinforce a conception of history teaching as a technical problem, where historians supply the content and teachers work out the pedagogy.

In order to examine these relationships, I studied four summer institutes of the California History-Social Science Project (CH-SSP), where there was no lack of discussion of content and pedagogy. At the same time and at the same professional development sites, however, I found a consciously invoked, countervailing discourse revolving around 'doing the discipline' of history (and related social sciences.) In this conceptualization, teachers' experiences in practising historical inquiry were seen as contributing quite directly to their teaching practices, whose goals included students being able to engage in historical inquiry (Berenson 1993, St. John 1993, Podany 1994a). While 'doing the discipline' did not erase the thorny problems of whose knowledge counts for what, I will argue that it provided a far more productive basis for historians' and teachers' collaboration than did a conception of expertise distributed along the lines of content and pedagogy.

In the first part of the paper, I examine how teachers and academics employed the notions of content and pedagogy. Next I take a close look at one scholar's presentation to an institute and analyse participants' responses to the session. The final section focuses on how and when 'doing the discipline', or teaching for historical understanding, contributed to transcending the content/pedagogy dichotomy.

The choice of sites and the research process

The California Subject Matter Projects (CSMP) comprise one of the most ambitious and large-scale efforts in the US in recent years to bring teachers and the professoriate together over curriculum issues. The CSMP grew out of a study of staff development commissioned by the governor and legislature and reported in 1987 (Little *et al.* 1987, St. John 1993: 8). The study concluded that, although staff development activities had 'sound prospects for favourably influencing classroom performance and the overall quality of school programmes', current programmes were 'unlikely to yield substantial change in the thinking or performance of California's classroom teachers' and generally 'reinforce[d] existing patterns of teaching' (Little *et al.* 1987: 7). Furthermore, it found that the state lacked 'a comprehensive or consistent policy orientation toward staff development or toward institutions that provide it' (Little *et al.* 1987: 9). The 1988 legislation that established the CSMP came out of these criticisms (California State Senate Bill 1882). The CSMP involved a collaboration between the state Department of Education and various post-secondary institutional systems in the state, i.e. community colleges, state universities, and the University of California. The California History-Social Science Project (CH-SSP) was one of nine subject matter projects.

CH-SSP ran four summer institutes in 1991. Its activities expanded so that in the summer of 1994, when this research was conducted, there were ten college and university sites for the project (Podany, letter of 22 February 1994). Each of the sites ran three-week summer institutes for teachers. Several supported additional professional development activities throughout the school year. They focussed on a variety of grade levels and

themes, defined in site grant proposals submitted annually for review to the state-wide organization.²

With assistance from Amanda Podany, then Interim Executive Director (now Executive Director), I chose four sites on the basis of three criteria. First, I sought well-established sites, all of them with directors who had served in that capacity for at least one year prior to the research visit. Second, I chose sites that would show contrast in the nature of the work between historians and teachers. These contrasts emerged initially in discussions with Podany and with Mark St. John, the consultant hired to conduct evaluations of the CSMP. They were elaborated by the summer institute proposals which each site prepared as funding applications to the state Board. Finally, I chose sites in respect to constraints on my travel arrangements. The four sites which I investigated are identified by pseudonyms: University A, University B, University C, and University D.

One-and-a-half years after the initial data collection, after another round of summer institutes had been held, I was invited to speak to a leadership retreat of the CH-SSP. Prior to the meeting, a draft version of this study was circulated to the approximately 60 participants from the Policy Board, the statewide office and ten sites. Participants responded to the draft both in small groups and in a subsequent plenary session. Notes from these sessions were incorporated into the next revision.

Part I: 'content' and 'pedagogy'

Teachers and professors invoked the discourse of content and pedagogy frequently throughout the interviews and in the sessions I observed at all four sites.³ They were the most frequently used set of terms, both to explain how the site functioned and to distinguish it from other sites in the CH-SSP or from other professional development projects (on a scale of more content/less pedagogy or less content/more pedagogy). My purpose in this section is not, however, to define the differences among the sites, but rather to explore the common use of these terms across sites. Nor is the purpose to present a rounded picture of the activities at the sites: I have drawn quotations specifically in order to explore the uses of the content/pedagogy dichotomy at all four universities.

A teacher-facilitator explains the marriage of content and strategies

At University A, the university-based director explained Institute leadership as 'a collaboration between a teacher who has a particular sort of expertise and myself ... The place would collapse without [her]'. The teacher-facilitator provided a particularly well-articulated distinction between content and strategies. Her major role in the institute, was to provide strategies for adapting lesson material to the particular students of the institute's teachers. She had developed a binder of classroom strategies,

highly valued by the teachers. The problem for history professional development activities, as she saw it, was this:

Teachers would come and they loved the content ... because classroom teachers never have the opportunity after college to really get in-depth knowledge of the subject ... My only question is always, 'Gee, this is great, but how do I bring this into the classroom?' So if you don't make that connection, all it is is a bunch of knowledge that's wonderful for the teacher but the kids never get the benefit of it.

And her solution to the problem was equally clear:

You take the content of the historian ... all of these strategies and the theory that comes with it and you're hopefully putting it together ... into a method where teachers can take it back and deliver it. So I see myself as kind of like a clearinghouse. I take all of this stuff. Then you say to the teachers – with them, brainstorming – How do you think we can get a fourth grader to understand this stuff? Teachers don't have time to do that either.

She had a wealth of experience in the middle school classroom and tremendous success in presenting classroom methods to teachers. For her, the historian was the keeper of the content, whose work she supplemented with strategies for content delivery.

She described an unsuccessful institute where there was 'lots of great content, historians giving great lectures, but never any – they never addressed how to get it into the classroom'. Teachers were frustrated, she said. In her analysis, the problem was a missing system of delivery, one that most historians could not really be expected to supply.

In contrast, what she saw as the successful model of her institute paid attention to both content and strategy:

We have historians giving background, lectures, they [the teachers] take notes and then meet together, based on these strategies that I will present before the historians come in. We then fit those strategies into the content, or the content into those strategies.

In her thinking, expertise in content lay with historians and expertise in pedagogy ('strategies') lay with teachers. Neither would be complete without the other, and the successful institute would bring them together.

A historian-director explains a content-focused institute

A number of people at the University B site spoke about its orientation towards content. 'We have the bias', one administrator at the site told me, 'that what we have to offer is the content'. The site's grant proposal defined the first goal as an 'intensive content-based summer programme'. This orientation, the directors argued, would make best use of the resources of the research university with which it was associated. Like University A's teacher-facilitator, they saw professors as experts in content. A teacher-facilitator explained further:

there are workshops every summer offered just on learning styles research or just on interdisciplinary teaching strategies. . . . What the university is particularly well-placed to do is to help teachers become more current on content or learn content that they don't know so far.

Comparing to other sites, 'people always tell us, "You have more content than any other project"'. Pedagogy, for him, was 'the alternative assessment, portfolios, learning styles research . . . this kind of stuff'. He acknowledged that this should play a part in the institutes, as well: 'we try and marry content and pedagogy in the kind of mix that works best for everybody'.

A historian, co-director of the institute, grappled with the content/pedagogy dichotomy. Describing his first contact with the project three years earlier, he said, 'they asked me to be one of the content lecturers'. His conception was that the historians would provide the content, and furthermore, that they would do so through lectures. Questioned on the terminology of content, he noted an ongoing tension between a 'pedagogical approach and content approach'.

The university can offer particular things, one of which, and perhaps the most important of which, is a sense of what's going on in the field of history. So that's what I mean by content lecturers. Lecturers coming in, discussing their work, not discussing in a particular way how to impart that work to students.

There was a logic to this division of labour and expertise. On closer examination though, it is questionable whether historians would speak this way of content outside of their work with teachers. It was in this context – where they communicated with those outside their own scholarly community and with school teachers in particular – that their knowledge became reified into content. The co-director remarked on discussions of postmodern destabilization of knowledge within the community of historians. Teachers, he speculated,

are probably not accustomed to the kind of debates that we get in the professional circles which is a complete breakdown of narrative, of any kind of construction of reality and truth. Now, all those sorts of big questions, postmodern or otherwise, that is very very difficult. I mean I have to take it seriously professionally but it's very very difficult to walk in here and say not only is there not a narrative of American history anymore, but even constructing a narrative is probably wrong.

He explored the divide between the playful uncertainty of academic history and the mask of certainty with teachers:

I mean when I'm in my other hat, I can celebrate the fact that history is dangerous, that history is problematic, that it's all troubling for all the right reasons, policy or otherwise. But coming in here and raising those concerns or opening up that Pandora's box, I'm not sure that's what I'm supposed to do here. I feel very uncomfortable in raising those sorts of concerns. It doesn't keep me up at night, but it makes me realize it can get harder rather than easier.

The content/pedagogy split was a piece of the mask of certainty.

An educator-director challenges content-focused sites

People at the University C site contrasted their work with what they knew of the University B site (in terms of the content/pedagogy balance), and yet they employed the same language of content and pedagogy in order to do so. They also dealt most explicitly with the concerns about the hierarchy in professional status. Responding to a set of principles proposed to the 1993 leadership retreat, the director (an educator with a strong interest in history) said,

What this is suggesting is that teachers need to learn history in the history project and what we're about is bringing in professors who can help them do that. And I find that to be ... a bit questionable but also presumptuous.

'We don't give them a content course', she went on to say. 'That is not what we're about in the Institute at all'. And she contrasted the collaborative/pedagogical focus of her site, with what she took to be a more hierarchical/content focus of some others. She observed that other site proposals were

all about the history content of the institute ... maybe 10 to 12, or 15 pages about immigration and all the nuances in immigration ... And I thought that was so odd because it really showed me that they conceived it as a course, a history course. The importance is the content.

Concerned about the problem of concentration on content, University C attempted to encourage mutuality between professors and teachers by inviting the former to observe the latter's demonstrations of their lessons. A teacher had a suggestion for professors, 'while they [teachers] may not get paid as much as you [professors] do and they may not know as much as you do about a certain area, that maybe you can learn something from them'. Historians, not only at University C and but at all the sites, spoke of having learned to think about teaching in new ways from their contact with K-12 teachers. As one historian said, 'They have things that they can teach scholars, scholars have things that they can teach them' (cf. Berenson 1993).

Yet this formula glosses over some of the difficulties and imbalances built into the relationship. Despite the collaborative intention (California Subject Matter Projects 1994), the CSMPs were funded to improve teaching in the schools, not in the universities. As a University C historian pointed out, all of the institutes were really focused on teacher growth; 'the whole structure operated that way'. He sketched a different, imaginary (and improbable) project where 30 university faculty would be brought together for three weeks of pedagogical lectures and demonstrations from 'school teachers who would be the experts'. The dichotomy of content and pedagogy was reinforced by the need to ascribe separate but equal fields of expertise to both historians and teachers. The search for a way to define teachers' expertise, balanced with the more recognized expertise of the historian, ended up in a separate realm of pedagogy.

Teachers make sense of content

Unlike University B, University D's first goal, as stated in the 1994 site proposal, introduced both content and pedagogy: 'The primary goal of the Institute is the development of content and resource-rich pedagogic strategies that integrate history and geography'. At this site, again, a diverse set of views on how the institute actually functioned was expressed in familiar content/pedagogy terms. A small group of kindergarten teachers provided a window into their views of professors' strengths (content) and weaknesses (pedagogy). One explained, 'I thought that the content basically was interesting. Just encourage them to try a little bit different strategies, a few different approaches'. Another noted,

I think their content is very valid. I am very excited to have been exposed to this mind expansion ... But we were just talking about methods, the difference in the way they get it across ... I think they could really learn from us in terms of imparting knowledge.

'These guys', said a third, 'are lecturers, they're not teachers'.

After one fast-paced lecture from a historian, a teacher told me that she needs to sift out a few basic concepts to organize her teaching around, and that the morning's lecturer had not done that.

This guy today was overwhelming, so many details. He wasn't that helpful in providing concepts. He's got all these details and dumped them on us. I have to work much harder to get the concepts.

If she were teaching the lesson, she said, she would organize a lot of the ideas around the idea of cultural diffusion.

Interviewer: Did he introduce [the concept of] 'diffusion'?

Teacher: No, that's my idea. Diffusion, tradition, world view: my three ideas that I organize things around. He uses facts and details. We relate to students' lives.

The concepts through which this middle school teacher proposed to organize the vast factual outpouring were, in fact, the very concepts which would have improved the lecture for an academic audience. She thus forged a link between the knowledge of academia and the schools *other* than the 'marriage' of content and pedagogy. Though this teacher posed clear conceptual organization as her own personal preference, in fact, such organization strengthens both academic and school knowledge. Indeed, the existence of concepts which serve to organize knowledge for both academics and school students offers the beginning of a different way of conceiving of the relationship between the two.

On many occasions, then, teachers, educators, and historians involved in the institutes used content and pedagogy to define the purposes and character of the institutes. These terms were particularly prominent in discussions of relations between the professors and teachers: they served to describe separate, but ostensibly equal, areas of professional expertise, which were 'married' in their encounters in the institutes. Yet, in important ways, this division both reified the split identified by Hertzberg, Dewey

and Shulman (among others) and obscured the common tasks teachers and professors faced in historical knowing, teaching and learning. On the other hand, this reification, as noted above, was by no means the whole story of the summer institutes. Competing discourses and practices existed side by side. Seen through the right lens, and with an adequate capacity for creative translation for a new audience, there was plenty of pedagogy to be found in the academic's content. In order to define this potential (and some barriers to its realization), the next section examines a 'content lecture' at one of the sites and some of the participants' responses to it.

Part II: The meaning of a 'content lecture'

On the first afternoon of my visit, anthropologist Susan Davis gave a lecture on her current research, a study of Sea-World, the animal theme park, as a cultural construction.⁴ A relatively young professor, she opened informally, leaning against the front of the table: 'It's always a pleasure to come and talk about my research'. She began with a mock self-deprecating questioning of whether an investigation of Sea-World could be significant. This provided the platform for the substance of her talk: an exploration of the experience of Sea-World, its seamless stories about nature, and the process of making these stories, whose construction most of Sea-World's visitors fail to interrogate. She noted Sea-World's omission of any reference to the complexities of human-nature interactions, or to the environmental problems which arise from human activity. She remarked on the different treatment of these issues at non-profit museums whose public educational role private-sector theme parks, like Sea-World, were challenging. A multi-layered corporate sponsorship, she contended, generated a 'hyper-commercial environment', that provided a controlled experience, bringing 'the foreign close' and making 'the murky clear'.

Davis's lecture provides an opportunity to examine 'content'. Davis offered such facts as the annual number of visitors, the ownership, the nature of displays. If content is information, or a set of factual statements about the world, then there was little of value in this lecture for California teachers following the state-mandated History-Social Science Framework. Nor were these facts, *qua* information, particularly important or useful information for students. Rather, it was Davis's *method as a researcher* that was most relevant. She used a complex cultural phenomenon (much as a historian uses a complex historical source) to generate important questions which would probe beneath surface appearances or 'experience' to uncover significant understandings about how our society works. If teachers were listening simply for significant information, they would have largely missed the potential import for them as teachers of young people in contemporary culture. Rather, it was her method, her process, her strategy, which provided the useful content. This process brought to the surface interesting conceptual issues, such as the nature of the public realm and the private, and ethical issues about human control and care of nature. And these arose directly from her interpretation of a complex source, Sea-World.

The lecture gave way to a lively questioning and discussion. One of the teachers asked Davis to comment on the controversy surrounding the then-proposed 'Disney's America' historical theme park at Manassas, Virginia. Another, one of the most persistent questioners, noted with considerable hostility that the private owners of these projects were at liberty to present whatever they pleased, and the market would judge whether people were interested in attending.

Davis did not have much advance preparation about the nature of the institute. She had conceived of it as an 'enrichment and development programme' for teachers, as time for them to do some 'thinking, research, and preparation'. She had not been clear that it was specifically oriented toward the teaching of history and social science. Nor did she know much about the teachers' classes, their students, or the California History-Social Science Framework. As she put it, 'my basic strategy is to show up and talk about what is interesting to me, and see what they will take from it'. She noted that, had she had a chance to meet with other institute presenters or heard their talks, she might have added references in her talk to themes and questions they had raised.

As to the teachers' sometimes hostile responses to her lecture, she said it was her job to make people question things: 'I was worried that they'd be defensive, [but] . . . there's nothing we can do about it'. For their part, the teachers were divided and sometimes ambivalent. Even when they did not see the potential pedagogy embedded in this content lecture, some found something of value in the experience. One teacher said, 'I don't get around people like this. I'm in my own little world'. At the same time, there was 'something about the presentation which put her off. [Davis] was trying to be subdued . . . She felt she had to trick us into believing that she didn't have an opinion'. One teacher responded more generally by explaining how the lectures worked for her:

Just by being here, you're being exposed to a lot of new ideas. There are bound to be indirect benefits from this for the classroom. The direct applications have probably not been as well developed as they could be.

Yet she anticipated some 'direct applications' of Davis's lecture as a 'counterpoint to visits to Sea-World' on which she led her sixth-grade classes each year. In the written evaluations at the end of the Institute, one teacher summed up: 'Davis was very controversial. Although many disagreed, it was nice to get a discussion going'.

In an interview, the institute directors responded not only to the lecture, but to the teachers' responses in the discussion that had followed it:

I was kind of surprised at how some people didn't seem to quite get it or to be extremely upset . . . [One teacher] just was really upset at the idea that you know, Sea-World has been criticized . . .

The professors, too, thought that Davis was tempering her interpretive stance, but rather than being upset at this as a 'trick', they were puzzled that the toned-down version generated these responses from teachers:

I think her interpretive angle is somewhat different than what she presented yesterday. I think her book would be a harsher book. But as a presentation to school teachers, I thought . . . she recognized the world they live in where they bring their kids to Sea-World.

One of the directors referred to the lecture as 'popular, cultural history'. She noted the similarity between the institute's ongoing stress on analysis of primary historical sources and the reading of Sea-World as a cultural text:

a lot of times teachers just think and we just think that 'primary sources' means it's the Declaration of Independence . . . but it also is theme parks. I mean places and things that they experience, the things that their students experience can also be primary sources.

In the session itself, however, nobody explicitly drew the relationship between reading historical documents and investigating contemporary cultural phenomena. The irony here, in the context of all of the institutes, is that Davis's content was pedagogy. Through her research, she was teaching the audience how to learn from examining a source, and showing the kinds of questions which could arise from this particular source.

Another director articulated what could and could not be expected from the 'content lecturers' like Davis:

My colleagues in the history department that I invite to speak to us do not know much of anything about educational theory. They don't know anything about how 12-year-olds learn. They know what they know and they know it best of anyone in a 500-mile orbit . . . I can't have Susan Davis come in and talk about the latest educational psychological theory about learning mechanisms. We don't know it.

He spoke as if the missing elements in this session were the learning styles research or co-operative learning strategies presented as pedagogy. But he was looking in the wrong direction: the pedagogy he sought was embedded in Davis's content. What was needed was someone who would articulate Davis's method, and show how the same kind of critique might be undertaken with students in the schools. Young people are immersed in a popular, public culture – largely governed, as Davis argued, by private corporate interests – profoundly shaping the values, ideas and the meanings they make of their own lives. As history/social science teachers, the Institute participants might well have students probe the messages conveyed in popular culture, and this talk could have been construed as an exemplary exercise in unpacking the meanings of a complex, layered cultural artifact, in analysing the text of the everyday.

Any number of those present – teacher, institute director, or Davis herself – could have opened the talk out in this direction. This application of her work lay truly on the intersection of the expertise of all of those in the room. In this case, the opening did not take place, but in other moments, at this site and others, the applications *were* clearly articulated. Accordingly, the final section of the paper identifies some of those moments where the content/pedagogy dichotomy was successfully transcended.

Part III: Transcending content/pedagogy by doing the discipline

The principles of the California Subject Matter Projects include the following: 'Effective professional development includes engagement in the work of the subject matter disciplines themselves' (California Subject Matter Projects 1994: 5). In turn, Berenson's statement of 'Vision and Goals' for the History-Social Science Project proposes, 'We try to create settings in which teachers can think about how students can learn historical ideas by practising historical methods'. Institute directors, facilitators, and participating teachers all articulated 'doing the discipline' as a principle of the CH-SSP sites. Indeed the current director has published a rationale for teachers' *learning history through investigation* (Berenson 1993, Podany 1994b, cf. Gardner and Boix-Mansilla 1994). This aspect of the CH-SSP vision may provide the most promising means of transcending the ubiquitous content/pedagogy dichotomy: *it is in the doing of the discipline that content becomes pedagogy and vice versa*. 'Doing the discipline' establishes a basis for teachers and professors to work together in a way which recognizes the expertise of historians, not as dispensers of fixed content, but as practitioners of a craft into which others are welcomed.

There are two closely related aspects of 'doing the discipline' of history. The first is the critical reading of texts, both primary sources and secondary accounts of the past. The second is the construction of historical accounts. Although these tasks are often construed as jobs for historians alone, in fact teachers and students engage in similar processes, though often less consciously. Teachers read, select, and edit texts that offer students accounts of the past. And, to the extent that these texts, and teachers' presentations of them, offer a coherent story, teachers also construct an account of the past for their students. Students, for their part, read texts, and, as Barton (1994), Epstein (1994), VanSledright (1995) and others have shown, selectively assemble their own account of the past (cf. Holt 1990). This is not to say that all accounts of the past are equally valid, or that all of those who 'do the discipline' so defined, do it equally well. It is only to make the point that historians, teachers and students are all involved in a roughly analogous process, and that the expertise of the historian, properly understood, might help to develop that of the teacher and, in turn, the student.

Each of the sites provided numerous opportunities for teachers to explore both aspects of 'doing the discipline'. A number of visiting historians took teachers through the process of examining sources in lecture/discussion format. A teacher at University B praised these exercises:

The best ... lecturers have been the ones who've handed us documents, given some framework for what they were about, and then walked us through how to use these documents.

She referred to an analysis of a document that fit the sixth-grade curriculum she was teaching. She noted the way the historian approached the document:

It wasn't like 'go find the answer to this'. It was 'ya [sic], go find the answer to this but it doesn't say the answer. You're going to have to read between the lines – and let me show you how'.

She remarked that both the specific document and the historian's analytical strategies would be of direct use to her in the classroom. The historian's process was going to be her process.

A facilitator described another similar session with a historian:

He simply had three documents, three letters transcribed, typed up, from a Committee of Free Men in South Carolina writing to General Howard. Howard responds and the same committee of men writing to President Andrew Johnson. And he just passed out the letters and people read all the letters and he started a conversation . . . 'Where did you get that, how did you know they're free men. Ah, yes'. And he demonstrated without ever saying, 'This is how you use a document in your classroom, this is how you do Socratic method of open-ended questions'. And they have four people sitting and reading the document, interrogating the document, and he led them right through how to use that sort of source. And you'd have to be a real closed-minded person to sit there and say, 'Ahm, I don't teach Civil War. I don't do American history. This doesn't help me. This has no connection to my classroom'.

The success of professors' use of primary sources 'is proof that hands-on how-to-do-it is head and shoulders above any other way to teach anything to anybody', said one director. But the 'how-to-do-it' is *history*, here, not something else. Content and pedagogy are inseparable in doing the discipline. Even conceiving of them as two different categories that must be united is no longer helpful.

The two institute directors of the 'content'-oriented site reached the same conclusion. Said one,

I finally had this thought that the things that worked the best . . . were not only they're getting good information and good history but they were given a good example of somebody doing it and teaching it.

He spoke of professors 'opening up their own process' with an investigation of primary sources. The historians had explained, moreover, in the face of some of their sources, 'I'm puzzled about this in my own research; I'm working on this; these are some of the questions I ask', modelling the groping and ongoing process of historical investigation. The director noted that with these sessions, the teachers 'not only become historians, but they learn about teaching technique'.

At another site, one of the kindergarten teachers who saw many of the professors as 'lecturers, not teachers', had a different view of the archeologist who had come to speak with them: 'we got into issues of what is archeology? How do archeologists know what they know? How do you piece together all this stuff? And that we can certainly address with little kids'. She compared the thinking that the archeologist had walked them through investigating the remains of a pottery, with an exercise she did with her students, investigating trash from McDonalds, the fast food chain, and what that might tell about the industry and culture it came from. The archaeologist's analytical processes could be replicated productively in the

classroom, with similar or different objects of inquiry. In response to the interviewer's direct question about what kind of expertise professors might offer teachers, one replied, 'how does a historian do their job, as well as how does an archeologist do their job'.

These demonstrations were not the only way that teachers were 'doing the discipline' at the institutes. At each of the sites, teachers were conducting original historical research aimed ultimately at materials and lessons for their classrooms. Sometimes their projects took the form of assembling and selecting primary historical sources which their students would be able to analyse. Just as historians examine primary sources, selecting, interpreting, and presenting, in order to give their readers a sense of what happened in the past, why it happened, and what it means today, these teachers were doing the same thing for their students.

Other teachers were building full-blown unit plans, informed by new readings and interpretations encountered during the summer and constructing a different kind of account of the past. At University A, facilitators offered formally structured critiques of these exercises. At University C, study-partners as well as facilitators offered similar reviews. At all the sites, presentations of these materials to colleagues offered opportunity for response and critique. Although this was a process in which the visiting historians generally did not share directly, resident scholars (both institute directors and others) offered comments that helped to supplement and broaden historical and geographic dimensions of teachers' presentations. Moreover, the work of the visiting historians helped to contribute to an intellectual climate where historical research was valued, whether it was presented as a research paper or as materials for lessons for schools. At the state-wide leadership retreat, a number of participants contended that this teacher research in history was the creative core of the entire project, again reaffirming the centrality of 'doing the discipline'. It was in the individual research that teachers felt the empowerment of crafting historical interpretations and exercises, grounded in historical sources, that were appropriate for their students' lives.

The notion of history as a constructed account of the past is central to examining the discipline, because this construction is the process that historian, teacher, and student have in common. The history lectures which were least worthwhile for teachers were those which did not expose their own construction. And, vice versa, those that were most worthwhile did so explicitly. At one site, the idea that all historical knowledge involves active construction was the topic of a director's lecture. One teacher explained, deliberately and with spirited excitement, her response to the talk, which, she claimed, would transform her teaching of the subject:

I was really struck, struck enough to write and to sort of grapple on paper with the idea of history as a construct. I don't know, maybe you guys [two other teacher interviewees] have dealt with that before, maybe it just hit you differently. I heard Steve say it in a lecture about a month ago in University D and it just of washed right past me . . . But when I heard it again the second time it sort of stopped right there.

The idea of history as a construction had prompted her to write four-and-a-half pages of reflection in her journal. What struck her from the lecture was the idea that

history was proactive and how . . . children have to make of it what they need to make of it for themselves. I'm going to spend a *lot* more time, instead of giving the narrative that I'm used to giving, I'm going to spend a *lot* more time in giving them the skills to look at history – or to look at the *past*, and construct the *history* that they see, based on their personal experience and as many other experiences as I can provide for them. *That* struck me. *That* would make my teaching different. That's not just adding-to. That would be *different*. I've always done the empathy [i.e. teaching historical empathy] but it never really hit me. I wanted them to learn, to understand how and why. But now it's more than understanding how and why people did what they did. Now it's more, 'You need to know *this* so that you can now come over here and do *this*' which is to formulate in your mind the truth that you are able to glean from the past.

She developed a lesson plan to help students understand the distinction between history (the constructed account of the past) and the past ('everything that has happened'). In her journal, she wrote,

understanding alone is not enough . . . We then need to connect back with the present and use that experience from the past to help us make judgements and decisions for the future.

The two other teachers who participated in the interview did not understand what was so exciting about these ideas for their colleague. When she spoke of, 'the idea that history will be different for each one of those children', she was getting at both the constructed nature of history, and its potentially deep personal relevance for young people. She recognized that students, like historians, have a task of constructing history. In her new understanding, her job *qua* history teacher was to stimulate and facilitate and help shape that construction. She was a long way from merely 'delivering' content.

Conclusion

A director at University D noted: '[The teachers] are trying to figure out ways of using things: a flood of information isn't going to help people to use it'. A high school teacher framed the problem even more cogently: 'I found the lectures fascinating, but we have to think about who is in our classes'. Thinking about *who* is in the university research community, *who* is in the professional development workshop, and *who* is in the classroom, is at the crux of the issues this paper addresses. The notions of content and pedagogy offer a seductively simple solution to the vexing question of how to bridge these three different groups, with distinctive roles for professors and teachers as experts in two respective areas. If the analysis above is correct, however, such talk misconstrues the nature of historical knowledge and genuine history learning.

Practising history involves reworking, analysing and interpreting traces and accounts of the past to construct narratives which will have meaning for particular contemporary audiences. The accounts that historians produce are historical 'content'. Yet, in communication within their own community, historians invariably tie these knowledge products explicitly and publicly to their practices, through the use of footnotes and references to documentary and historiographic sources – all responses to the ever-present threat of the question, 'How do you know that?'

What happens when historians communicate outside of their own challenging community? Specifically, what happens when they talk to teachers in professional development workshops? Here, they may shed what is crucial in their own community (the historians' *impedimenta* of footnoted documentary sources and historiographic controversy), rest on their own authority, and tell only what happened and why. This is the most problematic form of a 'content' lecture. Teaching and learning such desiccated content takes place with a radically different stance from that of historians when they teach and learn from each other. Historical knowledge becomes divorced from a way of knowing, and it must be 'delivered'. The greater the gap between the community which produced the knowledge and that which is attempting to learn, the greater the risk of reifying knowledge into content or information.

The notion of 'doing the discipline', on the other hand – a major presence in the founding documents of the CH-SSP, in the ideas of the state-wide project administration, and at each one of the four sites – has the power to mitigate these problems. In this conception, learning history is understood as learning how to know history. Here, historians open out their own process of knowing, inviting teachers to know the past with warrants comparable to their own. This kind of content incorporates a way of knowing, as does historical practice itself. In this setting, pedagogical concerns are no longer questions of delivery, nor can they possibly be separated from content. Rather, they take on dimensions of Shulman's (1987) and Wineburg and Wilson's (1991) 'pedagogical content knowledge': choices of topics of potential historical significance to students, knowledge of students' capacity for understanding difference, and selection of documents appropriate for students' levels of interest and understanding. Teachers' knowledge of their students (and historians' knowledge of the teachers in professional development institutes) are obviously crucial in dealing with these concerns.

Good history teaching thus exposes the process of constructing warranted historical accounts so that students can arrive at their own understandings of the past through processes of critical inquiry. The simple acceptance of one teacher's (or textbook's) account will not suffice. Without the knowledge of *how to know history*, students remain credulous in the face of any accounts of the past that they happen to encounter – and they will encounter a lot more accounts of the past outside of their history classrooms than they will in them.

To put it another way, historical knowledge comprises not only a set of factual claims, but also understanding of the warrant for those claims. Too often the shorthand of content stands for the factual claims alone. But how

one arrives at those claims – through the analysis and contextualization of historical traces, the assessment of historical accounts, and so on – is equally important. If the best way to learn is by doing, then historical pedagogy means leading students through those processes. Without such activities, there can be no critical historical knowledge at all.

In this light, the notion that professors are the content experts becomes unworkable. It distorts what the best of them have to offer: a window on a way of knowing. In the summer institutes of the CH-SSP, the lectures which exposed few of the historians' own disciplinary practices could only be received as historical 'truth' on the basis of the historians' authority. The participating teachers, later facing their own students in the same spirit, would constitute themselves as historical authorities, passing on the 'facts' (i.e. claims stripped from the processes which warranted belief in them as truth) they had learned from the professor. In the process, knowledge would be transformed into mere information.

Cognizant of this danger, the CH-SSP site directors made efforts to steer the historians towards presentations which would open up the discipline. Not all historians can (or care to) articulate *how* they know, as opposed to *what* they know. Historians needed (and generally received) preparation for their visits to the institutes, so that they would be ready to approach knowledge for teachers from this perspective.

For their part, teachers at times responded to 'content lectures' by asking questions that stayed on the same level at which the lectures were delivered, i.e. asking for more facts. When teachers saw professors' lectures as opportunities for more knowledge about 'doing the discipline', they reoriented their questioning to probe at the professors' historical practice. These questions stimulated an exchange more closely related to the scholarly seminar.⁵

Teachers at the institutes were overwhelmingly consistent in affirming that they needed to work with other teachers. The historians would always remain one step removed from the challenge of opening up the discipline of history to students in the schools. But teachers, in facing this challenge, have much more in common with the historians than if their task were to find creative ways to deliver historians' content. Despite their currency, the terms 'content' and 'pedagogy' appear now to be an intellectual shorthand which fails to do justice to the activities and accomplishments of the CH-SSP. As a new site director observed at the project's 1996 leadership retreat, '[teachers and historians in the CH-SSP] don't talk about what they do the way they actually do it'.

Conceptualizing teachers' challenge as 'learning to do the discipline' with young people (rather than learning the content and figuring out a way to deliver it) has the enormous advantage of conveying 'knowing' as an active process. Moreover, it is much more closely related to the active process faced by both historians and their own students.⁶ Precisely because the contemporary cultural milieu is fragmented, because meaningful accounts of the past are contentious, and because no single account will be taken as the truth simply by virtue of its being offered by an authority, students themselves need the means to assess historical accounts, to analyse

historical sources, and to construct consciously a framework of historical meaning for their lives.

Perhaps one of the most hopeful aspects of the California institutes is the development of communities spanning schools and universities, entertaining common understandings about the variety of challenges involved in learning and knowing history, and in teaching it to diverse audiences. There is probably no other jurisdiction in the US or elsewhere that has set up as promising an infrastructure for building such communities.

Of course, professional development is only one aspect of history education reform. If history 'standards' or curricula are defined primarily in terms of historical information to be conveyed, they will only reinforce the old split between content and pedagogy. Similarly, classroom texts and materials, assessment strategies, as well as the popular understandings of history education, will need to be aligned with a conception of history education as 'learning to do the discipline'. On the other hand, professional development may be the key aspect. 'At root', claim McLaughlin and Oberman (1993: x), 'the problem of reform is a problem of teachers' learning'.

In the UK in the 1970s, the Schools Council History Project pioneered an approach which put an understanding of history's 'perspectives, logic and methods' at the centre of the school subject (Shemilt 1980: 2). The Project developed courses, textbooks and assessments, and left an important legacy for the British National Curriculum. But other jurisdictions have been slow to adopt comparable reforms, perhaps, in part, because those responsible have not fully understood the British accomplishment. The creation of a vibrant history education community may serve as a catalyst for similar programmes elsewhere. Whenever children's historical 'illiteracy' becomes newsworthy (as it has recently in Canada) or when the public becomes embroiled in *which* national historical narrative to present to students (as it has recently from Australia to South Africa to the US) such communities become particularly important for thoughtful guidance of reform initiatives (Cuthbertson and Grundlingh 1995, Larsson 1995, Nash 1995, Yaffe 1997).

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Notes

1. The major initiatives of national scope in the US include the National Standards in History, National History Education Network, the History Teaching Alliance, National History Day, the National Council for History Education and the Bradley Commission on History in the Schools. See, e.g. Harlan 1990, Berenson 1993, Zilversmit 1993, Nash 1995, Spodek 1995.
2. At the time I first analysed the data, a year after gathering them, the CHSSP was finishing another round of Institutes. These followed a year of Project discussion, analysis, and growth. I dipped into this river in the summer of 1994: anyone testing the waters now would find a different river. And yet, there are things to be learned from this study – not as an evaluation of the Project, but for school/university collaborations more generally.
3. I used three main data-gathering techniques: 1) examination of printed documents, including funding proposals, course materials, evaluation reports of earlier years, and participant evaluations; 2) semi-structured interviews with the director(s), teacher-participants, visiting professors and teacher-facilitators; and 3) observations. I visited two of the sites twice, once shortly before the institutes began, as the directors and facilitators completed their planning, and once when they were under way. I visited the other two sites once, during the institutes. The total time spent at each site ranged from two to three days. At each site I was introduced to participants and facilitators by the director. I solicited volunteers for interviews either individually or in small groups. At those sites where teachers taught a range of grade levels, I included interviews with participants throughout the range. Interviews included questions about individuals' professional background, initial interest in the institute, role in the institute, observations of those with different roles, reflections on the activities, and expectations of the accomplishments of the institute. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. I took part in less formal conversations during breaks, meals and small-group sessions. Observations, recorded in field-notes, included professors' lectures and the discussions which followed, teacher presentations and curriculum discussions. I did not observe individual teachers engaged in historical research or curriculum-writing, important components of each site's activities. Given the nature of the data collection, it would not be appropriate (nor was it my purpose) to construe these data or this report as a Project evaluation.
4. For the essays which established the thriving genre of which Susan Davis's lecture is exemplary, see Susman (1984). 'Susan Davis' is not a pseudonym, as the topic of her research, which plays an important part in this account, would identify her in any case. She has given permission to use her name. The ideas of the lecture were subsequently published in Davis (1996).
5. Notably, the 'Vision and Goals' for the CH-SSP from February, 1993, included the statement, 'we strive to make our discipline accessible and exciting to students; doing so requires that we marry content and pedagogy'. The 1994 Leadership Retreat amended this principle to read, 'We see content and pedagogy not as separate entities but as intimately connected. We encourage teachers to engage students in practising the methods of history and the social sciences, which help make our disciplines accessible and exciting to them' (photocopies in possession of the author).
6. Of course, 'doing the discipline' becomes much more complex in an interdisciplinary professional development project. As can be seen from Susan Davis's lecture, such exercises provide important opportunities, but they need to be understood in all of their complexity. It becomes much harder to embark upon a systematic programme of teaching and critique of what it means to 'do the discipline', where several disciplines are involved.

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